Japanese Stiltgrass *Microstegium vimineum* (Trin.) Camus

Common Names: Japanese stiltgrass, Nepalese browntop, Asian stilt grass, Vietnamese stilt grass, Nepal microstegium, and Chinese packing grass

Native Origin: Japan, Korea, China, Malaysia and India

Description: Japanese stiltgrass is an annual grass (family Poaceae) with a sprawling habit that may grow to 3 feet in height. Its thin, pale green, lance shaped leaves, about 3 inches in length, alternate along a branched stalk and have a silvery stripe of reflective hairs down the middle of the upper leaf surface. Delicate spikes of flowers emerge from slender tips beginning in late summer and continuing into the fall. Seeds may persist through the fall. It spreads by rooting at nodes along the stem. A new plant emerges from each node. It also spreads by seed and each plant can produce an estimated 100-1,000 seeds.

Habitat: It occurs on stream banks, river bluffs, floodplains, emergent and forested wetlands, moist woodlands, early succession fields, uplands, thickets, roadside ditches, gas and power line corridors and home lawns and gardens. It is common in disturbed shaded areas like floodplains that are prone to natural scouring, and areas subject to mowing, tilling and other soil disturbing activities. Japanese stilt grass appears to be associated primarily with moist, acidic to neutral soils that are high in nitrogen. It occurs in areas of open soil that are generally not already occupied by other species. Japanese stilt grass is adapted to low light conditions and threatens native under story vegetation in open to shady locations.

Distribution: Japanese stiltgrass has been reported to be invasive in natural areas in fourteen eastern states (Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky, Maryland, North Carolina, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Virginia, Wisconsin, West Virginia) and Washington, D.C..

Ecological Impacts: Japanese stiltgrass is especially well adapted to low light conditions. It threatens native plants and natural habitats in open to shady, and moist to dry locations. Stilt grass spreads to form extensive patches, displacing native species that are not able to compete with it. Where white-tail deer are over-abundant, they may facilitate its invasion by feeding on native plant species and avoiding stilt grass.

Control and Management: Avoid introduction if possible.

Mechanical- Hand pull or mechanical cutting of plants using a mower or "weed whacker" on vegetative shoots of small infestations.

Chemical- For extensive infestations, where mechanical methods are not feasible, a systemic herbicide like glyphosate (e.g., Roundup), an herbicidal soap that kills the plants back (e.g., Scythe) and herbicides specific to annual grasses may be a more effective choice. If applying glyphosate to stilt grass in wetland sites, use the formulation labeled for wetland areas (e.g., Rodeo).

References: www.nps.gov/plants/alien

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Invasive Plants website: http://www.na.fs.fed.us/fhp/invasive_plants